

The Evolution of a Scenario From the Idea to the Check

A Whole Clinic of Specialists Works on Photoplay Before It Is Ready for the Camera Man

In the scenario department the motion picture is born. Sometimes it arrives as a pale, delicate, fragile idea—necessitating a whole clinic of specialists before it can make its first bow. At happier times it bursts into the world full grown, needing only a little remodeling here and some sandpapering there. But, however it arrives, it receives a careful early education and a gentle but firm guidance in the way all good motion pictures should go.

The process followed by a representative scenario department such as the one maintained at Universal City ought to be of interest to the 50,000,000 photo-playwrights who make life interesting for the said department. The best way to explain it is to pretend you are Miss King, of Gopher Prairie, and you have sent one of your brain-children to Universal.

Here is what happens:

The story is registered under your name, with its title and the date received. It is then delivered to an efficient man known as the head reader. He isn't what it sounds like, but is merely head of the readers. After a glance at your manuscript he gives it to one of his staff of readers, asking for a careful consideration and a report on the contents. It takes from two days to a week for the reader to get to your story, not because he is lazy but because the stories pour in on an average of a hundred a day and each receives equal consideration and attention. The majority of "submissions" are story outlines, written in synopsis form. That is the best way to prepare a story for presentation to a film company. Others that are sent in are magazine stories, books and the scenarios of stage plays. Each division is handled by a reader trained in that line.

What Becomes of "The Stolen Bride"

But suppose your story (let us call it "The Stolen Bride," for instance—half a dozen by that title are received every week)—suppose your story impresses the reader as a "possibility." He recommends it to the head of the readers, attaching his suggestions for improvement and comments on the plot. The head reads it personally then, as soon as possible.

It impresses him, in turn, as having a future. He presents it immediately to the editor or the associate editor. The editor reads your story, the comments of the reader and the opinion of the head of the readers. Let us say he concurs with their opinions and is enthusiastic about the scenario of "The Stolen Bride." It seems just the type of story he has been looking for for one of the stars.

He confers with his associate editor and the head reader. The story is analyzed, suggestions made to improve it—and it is improved for purchase. On this conference the studio manager often enters and adds valuable suggestions.

A few days later you receive a letter offering you a certain sum of money for the motion picture rights of your story, "The Stolen Bride." After you have shown the letter to your entire family and all the neighbors, you sign the contract that has been inclosed and return your acceptance of the company's offer.

The check is immediately written and sent to you—and you sit back and watch for next week's release on the program of the company. But if that is all you have to do now (and it is, unless you have some helpful afterthought that you communicate to the company)—it certainly isn't the end of the matter for the company.

How the Screen Dramatization Is Done

If your story is the ideal one for pictures, the work of preparing the continuity—or screen dramatization—will be comparatively simple. The editor will merely call in one of his staff of trained and performing writers and say: "Here—shoot this through. Bring me a perfect script of this perfect story." And the writer, after saluting and bowing himself out, will retire to his den in the mountains of Hollywood and tear loose on your "Stolen Bride."

But it doesn't work that way more than once in every hundred. As a rule, there is just enough material in the story you submitted to make a good groundwork and a skeleton of a photoplay scenario. Upon this groundwork the editor and one of his writers will build a structure that will answer all specifications and withstand the battering of those called to criticize and confer. Again there is a conference—possibly several of them—at which often both general manager and associate editor are present and heard from. At last the outline is ready, and the writer takes it and his typewriter far from distracting noise and proceeds to make the skeleton come to life.

The process of dramatizing screen material is very intricate, and necessitates a special training which can be obtained nowhere but in the studio itself. It is work which requires dramatic insight, an appreciation of humor and an observation of life. Who, then, could be better fitted for it than a trained newspaper man? The very nature of his training, the observation of tragedy, comedy and human interest, are the requisites for successful screen writing.

Here Are the Men Who Read Your Script

The newspaper man has at all times an open mind and is trained to be receptive to ideas. Therefore it is not

such a trick for him to learn the ins and outs of photoplay writing. That he succeeds admirably is evidenced by the roster of names of the leading writers of the films.

Universal has a goodly share—as witness Lucien Hubbard, scenario editor, formerly city editor of The New York Tribune; Associate Editor John Blackwood, former dramatic editor; C. F. Bender, LeRoy Armstrong, Earl Armstrong, George Piper, George Hull, John Colton, Wallace Clifton and Ford Beebe—all men with long experience in newspaper work. Rose Wiler, of the reading department, has had twenty-five years of newspaper experience. Just to keep it from being unanimous, there is a large leaven of writers drawn from other walks of life and trained to screen writing of just as high a grade. Eleanor Fried, A. P. Younger, A. W. Coldeway, George Morgan, Philip Hurn and Doris Schroeder are successful and efficient writers. All the above are members of the Screen Writers' Guild of the Authors' League of America. Which speaks for itself.

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James B. Leong, the Chinese producer, who has been at work for several weeks on the West Coast filming, "The Lotus Blossom," in which Lady Tsen Mei, the Chinese film star, will appear, is now on his way East, bringing with him the finished picture. "The Lotus Blossom" will be released through National Exchanges in October.

Carol Warren, formerly with the Metro Film Company scenario department and later with the Famous Players-Lasky Corporation, has been added to the scenario department of R-C Pictures and will go at once to the Robertson-Cole Studios, at Hollywood, Cal.

May Collins is to play opposite Gareth Hughes in "Little Eva Ascends," a George D. Baker production. "Little Eva Ascends" is a magazine story by Thomas Beers, a story of barnstorming life, with a young boy member of a theatrical family as hero.

Pauline Frederick's most cherished possession is a collection of fans at her home, Beverly Hills, near Los Angeles. They have come from all corners of the world and range from flimsy trifles of lace worth hundreds of dollars to equally valuable samples of the carved ivory fans of the Orient. Some have jeweled sticks, others are of nacre, and still others of precious woods. They range in size from tiny fans, seemingly only toys, to huge fans of ostrich feathers, with long handles, that were made to be swung by

black slaves over the couch of an African prince.

George MacQuarrie, who for the last five years has filled engagements with the World, Fox, Famous Players, International and Griffith, is now engaged on a Hearst International picture entitled "Find the Woman," which has an all-star cast.

Through an error a recent announcement of books and plays to be produced as Paramount pictures included "The Ebb Tide," by Robert Louis Stevenson. Lloyd Osbourne Stevenson's nephew, declares that no arrangements have been made for the filming of the book.

Erich von Stroheim is confronted with a difficult task. He must reduce 129,000 feet of film to the twelve reels that will go to the screen as "Foolish Wives."

Rumor that Pearl White, who recently obtained a divorce from Wallace McCutcheon in Providence, R. I., is to marry again is without foundation, according to the Fox star. "Mine was not a divorce of convenience, but one of necessity," was Miss White's comment, "and I have no idea of making it a necessity again."

The shooting of the interior and exterior scenes of the first Iris picture, "Tangled Hearts," has been completed. Work on cutting and assembling has already been begun at the company's studio in Fort Lee, and it is expected

Current Attractions in Broadway Picture Theaters



Bull Montana and Fatty Arbuckle in "Crazy to Marry" Rialto



Gloria Swanson in "The Great Moment" Rivoli



Betty Ross Clark in "Mother O' Mine" Strand



Scene from "The Golem" Criterion

Triple Exposure Film Revives An Old Instrument of Torture

Fiendish Photographer's Headrest, With Thumb screw and Clamps, Finds Useful Place in Motion Pictures

The double exposure trick in a motion picture, where you can see your favorite actor or actress simultaneously portraying a dual rôle, was long a puzzle to the average photoplay audience, and to some it still remains a mystery. Despite the numerous efforts to safeguard the secret, the process became widely known and was explained to every movie enthusiast. Now the triple exposure film, for which an explanation was not even attempted, is the latest cat to be let out of the motion picture director's bag of tricks.

The prestidigitator in this case is Thomas H. Ince, who gives inside information on how triple exposure is "shot" for the films. The director explains the resurrection of the old-fashioned headrest with which he achieved visionary effects in his latest production, "Mother o' Mine," which will be presented at the Strand Theater for a run, beginning to-day. In a letter Mr. Ince says, in part:

"The fiendish photographer's headrest, second as an instrument of torture only to the thumbscrew and the

rack, yet without which no photographer could have taken a picture a decade ago, has found a valuable place in motion pictures. The headrest—it will be remembered by thousands whose staring likenesses repose in family albums—consists of two steel claws, mounted on an adjustable metal stand. The photographer's procedure was to place the stand behind the subject whose picture was to be taken and the clamp the steel claws behind the victim's ears, where, out of sight of the lens, they prevented the head from moving while the camera shutter was open. This method accounts for the agony-wrung countenances of untitled fame. Henry Sharp, my chief cameraman, utilized this headrest in "Mother o' Mine" as a means of securing a remarkable triple exposure effect.

How Likenesses Are Superimposed

"In a particular scene one of the characters, staring intently at his son's face, is carried away by memory and sees the likenesses of two other persons he had known in the past take visionary form. The business of the camera was to show the audience the boy's countenance as it was seen by the father—first as it actually existed before his eyes, then as it was replaced by the faces of the two former acquaintances in slow succession, and finally returning to the boy. Various methods were attempted, with unsatisfactory results. The three faces were not evenly superimposed. The first face would be in one position; the second several inches on one side or the other. Then the cameraman resorted to the old-fashioned and long-discarded headrest.

"Placing it firmly in position, he fitted the head of the first subject to be photographed evenly against the steel claws and exposed the necessary amount of film. The first subject gave way to the second, whose head was placed in exactly the same position against the headrest. The third was placed similarly, with the result that in the finished picture every feature of the different subjects is distinguishable and in exactly the same position on the screen, thereby making the triple exposure a vision as realistic to the audience as it was supposed to have been to the screen character."

Vaudeville

PALACE—Ethel Barrymore, in Barrie's "The Twelve Pound Look," returns for her final week in vaudeville. Fradkin, violinist, with Jean Tell, prima donna; Mrs. E. Hathaway-Turnbull and her original animal "movies," Swannstrom and Morgan, Kramer and Boyle, Harry J. Conley and others complete the bill.

RIVERSIDE—Blossom Seeley, in "Miss Syncopeation," heads the bill. Gallagher and Sheen, in "Egypt," Jack McGowan, Luke and Midgely, Varvara, Van Cello and others fill out the program.

EIGHTY-FIRST STREET—May Wirth, the equestrienne, and Harry Holman, in "Hard Boiled Hampton," Ethel Clayton, in "Wealth," will be the film.

FORDHAM—Beatrice Morgan, in "Moonlight Madness," heads the Old Home Week bill for the early half, with "The Rider of the King Log" for the picture. Beginning Thursday a local bill of Fordham talent will be given and the picture will be Ethel Clayton in "Wealth."

HAMILTON—Voyeur and Wendell, Margaret Ford, Joe Darcey, Newhoff and Phelps and others appear early in the week, with "The Parish Priest" for the film. Beginning Thursday Venita Gould, Frank and Milt Britton, Espi and Dutton, with Ethel Clayton in "Wealth" are the attractions.

LOEW'S AMERICAN—"Out of the Dust" on the screen and "Dance Novelties" for the stage are the chief attractions for the first of the week. Beginning Thursday Kinney and Shelby, in "A Dance Production," with Tom Meighan, in "The Conquest of Canaan," are principal features.

MOSS'S BROADWAY—Patricia has the stellar honors, with Marshall Montgomery, Pauline Saxton, Annaruth photo play will be shown. Ranth Sisters, Carroll and Gorman and others also on the bill. A new

PROCTOR'S FIFTH AVENUE—Bill Robinson, Will Morris, Newell and most, Frank Moran and others are on the bill for the first part of the week. Beginning Thursday Bessie Remple, De Voe and Stutzer, Eight Blue Devils, Hall and Moran and Charles Ferguson will appear.

PROCTOR'S TWENTY-THIRD STREET—The Wilton Sisters head the bill for the first half of the week. Hollis Quinten, Doody and Wright, with Hope Hampton in "Love's Penalty," are other features. Beginning Thursday Jack McLaughlin, Kane and Her Crofton Snow and Dorothy Dalton in "Behind Masks" are the attractions.

PROCTOR'S FIFTY-EIGHTH STREET—Tommy Allen, Spoor and Parsons, Inman and Lyons, Vernon, Togo, Eugene O'Brien in "Is Life Worth Living" the film, the first of the week. Beginning Thursday John S. Blundy, Annabelle, Jim Dougherty, Hickey and Hart, with Dorothy Dalton in "Behind Masks."

PROCTOR'S 125TH STREET—Joan Graner, Elaine Sheridan, the De Lyons and others, with Eugene O'Brien in "Is Life Worth Living" for the first half. Beginning Thursday George Zrowall, George Zrowall, Pressler and Klais, with Ethel Clayton in "Wealth for the Picture."

In Picture Theaters

ASTOR—"The Old Nest," the Goldwyn picture by Rupert Hughes, continues.

CAPITOL—Sessue Hayakawa in "Where Lights Are Low" is the feature picture, a Robertson-Cole production directed by Colin Campbell. The Oriental theme is carried out in the scenes and the music also has a Far East tang.

CENTRAL—"Thunderclap," a William Fox feature, is presented.

CRITERION—"The Golem" continues. The supplemental program includes interesting views of "Old Prague," the scene of the picture. "Tricked" remains the same, with the "Eli, Eli" lament as the chief feature.

LYRIC—"Shame," a William Fox production, has its first showing.

PARK—Wednesday, August 3, "A Virgin Paradise" will be presented by William Fox.

RIALTO—Roscoe "Fatty" Arbuckle in his latest Paramount comedy, "Crazy to Marry," is the chief screen feature, with Irving Cummings' "Tricked" furnishing the dramatic element. The music includes Von Suppe's "The Beautiful Galatea" and Lehar's "Gypsy Love." John Priest plays Mack's "Valse Arabesque."

RIVOLI—Gloria Swanson remains for a second week in Elinor Glyn's "The Great Moment." The Pathé comedy "Teaching the Teacher" also continues. The music program is the same as last week's, opening with Tachakowsky's concerto.

STRAND—"Mother o' Mine," a Thomas H. Ince production, with Joseph Kilgour and Betty Blythe in the cast, is the feature. The music program has the "Peer Gynt Suite" as overture.

Melodic Atmosphere for Capitol's Oriental Picture

"A Chinese Fantasy," a compilation of popular melodies of Oriental flavor, will create the Chinese atmosphere for the Hayakawa feature, "When Lights Are Low," at the Capitol Theater this week. A special setting has been designed for this number, in which the entire Capitol organization, including the quartet and ballet corps, will take part. The dance numbers will be done by Mlle. Gambarelli and Alexander Oumansky. The young tenor, Sudworth Fraser, who sang at the Capitol last year, returns for a duo number with Maria Samson, "The Morning of the Year," by Cadman. Bureleigh's negro melody, "Deep River," will be repeated this week by request, sung by the Capitol's mixed quartet, and the overture, by the full orchestra, under the direction of Erno Rapee, will be from Offenbach's "Orpheus."

South Seas and New England on Screen in "A Virgin Paradise"

William Fox will present "A Virgin Paradise," the third of his new feature photoplays, at the Park Theater, Columbus Circle, beginning next Wednesday afternoon. The story was written by Hiram Percy Maxim. It is his first photoplay.

"A Virgin Paradise" was staged and directed by J. Searle Dawley. He has evolved a picturesque romance, which begins in the islands of the South Seas and culminates in an aristocratic old New England home. The leading rôle is played by Miss Pearl White, who is seen first as a waif of the South Seas, a child living alone on a desert island through the death of her father, a missionary. Reared in these primitive surroundings, a freak of fortune makes her the heiress of millions, and she is transplanted into the atmosphere of modern society. How her primitive instincts rebel amidst these surroundings and how she finds true love through the veil of hypocrisy make up the story.

Others in the cast are Robert Elliott, J. Thornton Baston, Alan Edwards, Henrietta Floyd, Grace Beaumont, Mary Beth Barnelle, Lynn Pratt and Charles Fulton. The picture will be shown twice daily at the Park Theater, at 2:30 and 8:30 p. m.

Brooklyn Theaters

BUSHWICK—Florence Moore heads the comedy bill. Solly Ward and Marion Murray in "Babies," Swift and Kelly in "Gum Drops," Bobbe and Nelson, Philbrick and Deveau, Brent Hayes and others complete the program.

ORPHEUM—Harry Watson Jr. is top-liner, with Pretty Nonette, Jimmy Duffy, Olcott and Mary Ann, Francis Renault, Alice and Mary McCarthy, Joe Bennett and others to fill out the bill.

LOEW'S METROPOLITAN—"The Conquest of Canaan," with Thomas Meighan and Doris Kenyon, for the screen and James Kennedy heading the vaudeville bill are the features for the first of the week. Beginning Thursday the Sherlock Sisters and Clinton, with "Out of the Dust" for the film, are the attractions.

NEW BRIGHTON—Headline honors are divided among Kitty Doner, Frank Van Hoven and the Watson Sisters. The rest of the bill includes Solly Ward, Clinton and Rooney and Emil Gautier's "The Toy Shop."

STRAND—Harold Lloyd's comedy "Among Those Present" and "Nobody," a First National Production, featuring Jewel Carmen, are the chief attractions. The overture is "Raymond."

"Thunderclap," Racing Melodrama, Is the Film Feature at Central

"Thunderclap," a racing melodrama, with thrilling episodes and picturesque scenes, produced by William Fox, is the new attraction at the Central Theater.

"Thunderclap" was written by Paul H. Sloane and directed by Richard Stanton. The important figures in the cast are Mary Carr, Violet Mersereau, J. Barney Sherry, Paul Willis, John Daly Murphy and Walter McEwan.

The story of "Thunderclap" is written around a racehorse of that name. There are race effects, "close-ups" of the horses in action and episodes of a melodramatic nature. Every effort is made in the story to keep Thunderclap from winning the race on which the fortunes of the hero and heroine are at stake, but, needless to say, the villains are foiled at every turn, even though at one time it appears that they have succeeded.

The engagement of "Thunderclap" at the Central Theater is limited, owing to the fact that the summer lease on that playhouse held by William Fox will terminate with the opening of the